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## Humans injected with/plutonium

By MAURICE H. THOMPSON D&C Staff Writer

Strong Memorial Hospital was one of four hospitals that took part in a secret government project toward the end of World War II, in which researchers injected about 18 people with heavy but non-lethal doses of plutonium. The subjects weren't told what they were being given, a University of Rochester professor confirmed yesterday.

## at Strong

plutonium.

The justification for the project, he said, was that Americans feared the Germans would "develop and explode an atomic bomb before we did."

The U.S. needed to know, he said, what effects plutonium would have when absorbed by the body.

"We had to determine," be said, in the world have and how fast plutonium would be absorbed or excreted

from the gastro-intestinal system.

American workers working with plutonium. It was essentially a manufacturers' hygiene experiment," connected with atomic bomb production, Bale

what we found out is that the substance is not excreted rapidly and that in some dosos it becomes carcinogenic (cancerous)".

But this finding, he said, had already been confirmed in experiments with animals.

While the doses given the patients ranged from about two to more/than

Dr. William F: Bale, a professor of radiation biology and biophysics at the University, said the experiment was to determine how much of the poisonous radioactive substance workers in a power plant could withstand.

The Manhattan District Corps of Engineers Project — code name for the government's secret and successful effort to develop the world's first blomic bomb — sponsored the tests at Strong and at the Billings Hospitals at

"I have mixed feelings about the experiment and I know it would be regarded as an unethical experiment today," Bale said. "But it seemed to serve a useful purpose at the time and we were in the middle of a war."

Milton Lederman, a University of Rochester Medical Center spokesman, said, in a statement that 11 patients were given "trace amounts of radioactive plutonium" at Strong during wartime project.

He said the univerity believed the patients knew they were part of a scientific investigation and "we also believe the patients voluntarily consented.

"As far as we can determine, there was no adverso effect on the patients' health as a result of the studies."

All of the 18 subjects in the experinent nationwide were considered terninally ill at the time.

Three of the subjects tested nationide are alive today. Dr. James dverman of the energy Research and levelopment Administration said

Part of WW II

atomic bomb project

the University of Chicago, the University Hospital at the University of California in San Francisco and at, a government hospital in Oak Ridge,

One of the subjects, a black man, now living in Texas, was the only one to get the maximum dose, Liverman said. He said the man was injected in the leg, below the knee, about 48 hours before the leg was amputated at the knee because of existing cancer.

The agency's fact sheet, on the experimental injections said that seven people who received them lived less than one year afterwards; three lived between one and three years; two between 14 and 20 years; one 28 years, and the fate of two is unknown.

Thirteen of the human guinea pigs were men and five were women; 15 were whites and three were blacks; and most were middle-aged adults, although the age span ranged from 4 to 65, the fact sheet said.

Dr. Bale, who was at the time commissioned as a researcher for the related atomic Energy Project at the university, said a team of three physicans and nurses at Strong administered the plutonium tests on "about a dozen people who were supposed to have a short life expectancy."

The test subjects, he said, "did not come voluntarily to the project and it is my impression they did not know they were being treated with

